

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle
Special Council Workshop and Joint Meeting with the Charter Change Committee
at Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street – New Castle – Friday – June 3, 2011 – 8:35 a.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: Charter Change Committee Members:

Genevieve Miller, John Houben, Josephine Moore, James Vincent, Dan Losco

City Administrator Cathryn Thomas

Dr. Miller provided an introduction to the group, noting that there have been times in the past when the City has sought to make changes in its charter, however those processes had not been completed. She noted that there are a number of issues which could be addressed, such as boundaries, elections and the Mayor's Court, as some examples. She said, however, it would be beneficial starting out this process for the Council to provide some direction and guidance for what they want the Charter Change Committee to look at. Council President Barthel responded that his expectation was the Committee would look at the entire charter and consider what changes may be appropriate for all segments of the document.

Some discussion took place concerning the time line. It was discussed that if the Committee had their recommendations to the Council in the October or November time frame, then the Council could conduct a review and approve the changes they agreed upon in time for this to be presented to the General Assembly in Dover in January, when their new legislative session begins.

Dr. Miller said her preference would be for her group to work on the document and when they have recommendations for four or five segments, that those could be presented to Council for consideration. This same process could be repeated until the entire Charter had been reviewed.

Mr. Losco added that the Committee could work in sub-groups and that different groups could work on different sections of the Charter.

Dr. Miller said as far as a schedule for her group to meet, she envisioned at the beginning to meet more frequently, perhaps two times per week, and then as they get underway have a regular schedule of meeting once per week.

There was discussion on the City Solicitor attending all meetings of the committee. The final consensus was that Mr. Losco is intended to be a full committee member and should be in attendance at all meetings (as his schedule permits).

Councilperson Cochran said one charter section which he would like to see changed is that instead of the current system of all elected officials having the same, coinciding two-year terms, that those terms be changed so they are staggered.

Council President Barthel said he would like to have the charter changed relative to the requirement that whenever the City Council approves any kind of borrowing, that a special election is required.

Council President Barthel concluded the meeting by thanking the members of the Charter Change Committee for their willingness to work on this important matter on behalf of the City.

A motion was made by Councilperson Megginson for the City Council to adjourn the special City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Petty and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn C. Thomas
New Castle City Administrator